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ACTION HA-05

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C O N F I D E N T I A L BUENOS AIRES 4582

E.O. 11652 XGDS
TAGS SHUM, ELAB, AR
SUBJECT DISAPPEARANCE OF CERAMICS WORKERS IN 1977

REF: A BUENOS AIRES 2677; B BUENOS AIRES 4119

1. INTRODUCTION. THIS CABLE REPORTS THE RESULTS OF INQUIRIES WE HAVE MADE IN RESPONSE TO A REQUEST INITIATED BY HA/HR.

2. WE HAVE RECEIVED FROM THE NEXT-OF-KIN, THE NAMES OF OF 7 EX-WORKERS OF TH LOZADUR CERAMICS (PLATEWARE) FIRM, AN ARGENTINE-OWNED COMPANY IN BOULOGNE, BUENOS AIRES PROVINCE (ON THE NORTHERN OUTSKIRTS OF THE FEDERAL CAPITAL), REPORTEDLY TAKEN FROM THEIR HOMES BY ARMED INDIVIDUALS ON NOVEMBER 3, 1977. THE SEVEN DISAPPEARED ARE:
SOFIA TOMASA CARDOZO, CI NO. 9012990
FELICIDAD ABADIA CRESPO, LC 10443072
DOMINGA ABADIA CRESPO, LC 7046018 (SPANISH BORN)
ELDA PUENTE, LC 3972780
FERDINANDO PALAVECINO, LE 7894879
ISMAEL NOTALIVERIO, CI 2598600
PABLO VILLA NUEVA, LE 6723951

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3. WE HAVE ALSO BEEN ABLE TO CONFIRM THESE DIS-

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR
REVIEWED BY Rosebud DATE 4/2/82
RDS☐or XDS☐EXT. DATE
TS AUTH. REASON(S)
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APPEARANCES THROUGH A SOURCE WE CONSIDER RELIABLE WHO IS IN CONTACT WITH THE MANAGEMENT OF THE FIRM. THIS SOURCE REPORTS THAT, IN ALL, HE WAS HEARD DENUNCIATIONS OF BETWEEN 15 AND 20 DISAPPEARANCES OF LOZADUR WORKERS IN NOVEMBER 1977 AND OF 5 TO 10 WORKERS FROM OTHER CERAMICS PLANTS IN THE SAME AREA DURING THE SAME PERIOD. THE SOURCE BELIEVES THAT THE DISAPPEARANCES ARE THE RESULT OF A SECURITY OPERATION IN THE AREA, PRESUMABLY BY INTELLIGENCE ELEMENTS OPERATING OUT THE ARMY COMMUNICATIONS SCHOOL IN NEARBY CAMPO DE MAYO. SOME OF THE DISAPPEARED WORKERS, THE SOURCE BELIEVES, MAY HAVE ELUDED CAPTURE AT THE TIME AND MAY BE CURRENTLY AT LARGE. (ANOTHER SOURCE WHO CONSORTS WITH ARMY INTELLIGENCE AGENTS HAS ALLEGED TO US THAT 19 CERAMICS WORKERS WERE EXECUTED IN CAMPO DE MAYO IN NOVEMBER 1977.)

4. THESE DETENTIONS OR DISAPPEARANCES OF CERAMICS WORKERS LAST YEAR TOOK PLACE AGAINST A BACKDROP OF SERIOUS LABOR TROUBLE AT THE LOZADUR PLANT, INCLUDING A SLOWDOWN BY THE WORKERS, MOSTLY WOMEN, IN PROTEST AGAINST LOW WAGES AND POOR SANITARY CONDITIONS AND A LOCKOUT AND FIRING OF 350 WORKERS (OUT OF A LABOR FORCE OF 1300) BY THE MANAGEMENT.

5. ON OCTOBER 26, 1977 DURING THE MIDST OF THE LABOR PROBLEMS, A LOZADUR SHOP FOREMAN NAMED RICARDO SALAR WAS ASSASSINATED AT HIS HOME. SALAR WAS REPUTED TO HAVE BEEN A FIGURE CLOSELY IDENTIFIED WITH THE ORTHODOX PERONIST TRADE UNION LEADERSHIP STRUCTURE IN THE NORTHER OUTSKIRTS

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OF THE FEDERAL CAPITAL WHICH DURING THE MID-1970S LOST CONTROL OF THE CERAMICS UNION TO ELEMENTS UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF TH MONTONEROS. ACCORDING TO SECURITY OFFICIALS, SALAR WAS ASSASSINATED BY MONTONEROS, PRESUMABLY WITH THE INTENT OF EXPLOITING THE LABOR TROUBLES AT THE PLANT.

6. THE NEXT-OF-KIN OF THE SEVEN DISAPPEARED WORKERS HAVE SENT A MEMORANDUM TO CATHOLIC CHURCH OFFICIALS CHARGING SOME OF THE LOZADUR STOCKHOLDERS

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WITH HAVING PRECIPITATED THE LOCKOUT DELIBERATELY WITH THE INTENT OF FORCING THE COMPANY INTO BANKRUPTCY. A MANAGEMENT SOURCE (PROTECT) HAS DENIED TO US ANY COLLUSION ON THE PART OF THE MANAGEMENT IN THE SECURITY OPERATION WHICH LED TO THE DISAPPEARANCE OF THE WORKERS, ALLEGING THAT ARMY AGENTS INFILTRATED THE PLANT ON THEIR OWN AND HAD NO NEED OF CONSULTING WITH MANAGEMENT TO IDENTIFY AND ACT AGAINST MONTONERO SUSPECTS.

7. COMMENT: WE ARE SKEPTICAL ABOUT THE SELF-SERVING MANAGEMENT COMMENT IN PARA 6 ABOVE. WE BELIEVE THERE IS A GREAT DEAL OF COOPERATION GENERALLY BETWEEN MANAGEMENT REPRESENTATIVES AND THE SECURITY AGENCIES AIMED AT ELIMINATING TERRORIST INFILTRATRATORS FROM THE INDUSTRIAL WORK PLACES AND AT MINIMIZING THE RISK OF INDUSTRIAL STRIFE. SECURITY AUTHORITIES HAVE MADE A GENERAL OBSERVATION TO EMBASSY ELEMENTS RECENTLY -- WITHOUT SPECIFIC REFERENCE TO THE SUBJECT CASE -- THAT THEY ARE TAKING GREATER CARE THAN IN THE PAST IN DEALING WITH DENUNCIATIONS FROM MANAGEMENT OF ALLEGED TERRORIST ACTIVITIES IN THE PLANTS WHICH MAY BE LITTLE MORE THAN LIEGITIMATE (ALBEIT ILLEGAL) LABOR UNREST.
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